

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

responsive to a first input to a computer by a first user of an instant messaging service configured for sending and receiving a plurality of text messages in real time between the first user and a second user, determining, by a processor of the computer based only on the first input, that a topic tag is to be inserted into a text message of an instant messaging session, wherein the instant messaging service is configured to accept the first input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

responsive to a second input to the computer by the second user, determining by the processor, one of a first acceptance and a rejection of the topic tag by the second user;

responsive to the first acceptance, automatically inserting the topic tag, by the processor, into the text of the instant messaging session when a turn is identified by the processor, wherein a turn means a shift in a textual communication during the instant messaging session indicated by a plurality of successive statements;

responsive to the rejection, continuing the instant messaging session without an insertion of the topic tag;

responsive to a third input to the computer by the first user, determining by the processor of the computer that a sub-topic tag is to be inserted into a segment of the text corresponding to the sub-topic, wherein the instant messaging service is configured to accept the third input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

responsive to a fourth input to the computer, determining by the processor, a second acceptance of the sub-topic tag by the second user;

responsive to the second acceptance, automatically placing the sub-topic tag, by the processor, into the segment of the text when a change from a topic shift occurs in the instant messaging session;

displaying a graphical user interface that has a first area for displaying the chat transcript of the instant messaging session and that displays a topic list at an end of the chat transcript, a first sub-topic tab, and a second sub-topic tab; and

wherein upon activation of a selected topic in the topic list, the selected topic is displayed with a first corresponding transcript segment in a second area of the graphical user interface, upon activation of the first sub-topic tab, the first sub-topic is displayed with a second corresponding transcript segment in a third area of the graphical user interface, and upon activation of the second sub-topic tab, the second sub-topic is displayed with a third corresponding transcript segment in a fourth area of the graphical user interface.

38. (Canceled)

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 further comprising:
saving a transcript of the instant messaging session to a repository;
searching the repository for the topic tag; and
responsive to determining that there is a match between the topic tag in the repository and an entry in an auto alert table, exporting an associated transcript segment to an e-mail.

40. (Previously Presented) A system comprising:
a computer connected to a plurality of remote computers and to an instant messaging service by a network, the instant messaging service configured for sending and receiving a plurality of text messages in real time between a plurality of users on the plurality of remote computers;
a computer readable memory and a non-transitory computer readable storage medium;
first program instructions for determining, responsive to a first input to the computer by a first user, that a topic tag is to be inserted into a text message of an instant messaging session, wherein the instant messaging service is configured to accept the first

input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

second program instructions for determining, responsive to a second input to the computer by the second user, an acceptance of the topic tag by the second user;

third program instructions for automatically inserting, responsive to the acceptance, the topic tag into the text of the instant messaging session when a turn is identified, wherein a turn means a shift in a textual communication during the instant messaging session indicated by a plurality of successive statements;

fourth program instructions for determining, responsive to a third input to the computer by the first user, that a sub-topic tag is to be inserted into a segment of the text, wherein the instant messaging service is configured to accept the third input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

fifth program instructions for determining, responsive to a fourth input to the computer, an acceptance of the sub-topic tag by the second user;

sixth program instructions for automatically placing, responsive to the acceptance, the sub-topic tag into the segment of the text when a topic shift occurs in the instant messaging session;

seventh program instructions for displaying a graphical user interface that has a first area for displaying the chat transcript of the instant messaging session and that displays a topic list at an end of the chat transcript, a first sub-topic tab, and a second sub-topic tab; and

eighth program instructions for displaying, responsive to activation of a topic in the topic list, the topic with a first corresponding transcript segment in a second area of the graphical user interface, responsive to activation of the first sub-topic tab, displaying the first sub-topic with a second corresponding transcript segment in a third area of the graphical user interface, and responsive to activation of the second sub-topic tab, displaying the second sub-topic with a third corresponding transcript segment in a fourth area of the graphical user interface;

wherein the first through the eighth program instructions are stored in the non-transitory computer readable storage medium for running by a processor of the computer via the computer readable memory.

41. (Canceled)

42. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40 further comprising:
ninth program instructions for saving a transcript of the instant messaging session to a repository;

tenth program instructions for searching the repository for the topic tag; and

eleventh program instructions for exporting, responsive to determining that there is a match between the topic tag in the repository and an entry in an auto alert table, an associated transcript segment to an e-mail;

wherein the ninth, tenth, and eleventh program instructions are stored in the non-transitory computer readable storage medium for running by a processor of the computer via the computer readable memory.

43. (Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising:

a non-transitory computer readable storage medium;

first program instructions to connect a computer to a plurality of remote computers and to an instant messaging service by a network, wherein the instant messaging service is configured for sending and receiving a plurality of text messages in real time between a plurality of users on the plurality of remote computers;

second program instructions for determining, responsive to a first input to the computer by a first user, that a topic tag is to be inserted into a text message of an instant messaging session, wherein the instant messaging service is configured to accept the first input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

third program instructions for determining, responsive to a second input to the computer by the second user, an acceptance of the topic tag by the second user;

fourth program instructions for automatically inserting, responsive to the acceptance, the topic tag into the text of the instant messaging session when a turn is identified, wherein a turn means a shift in a textual communication during the instant messaging session indicated by a plurality of successive statements;

fifth program instructions for determining, responsive to a third input to the computer by the first user, that a sub-topic tag is to be inserted into a segment of the text, wherein the instant messaging service is configured to accept the third input before the instant messaging session begins, during the instant messaging session, and after the instant messaging session;

sixth program instructions for determining, responsive to a fourth input to the computer, an acceptance of the sub-topic tag by the second user;

seventh program instructions for automatically placing, responsive to the acceptance, the sub-topic tag into the segment of the text when a topic shift occurs in the instant messaging session;

eighth program instructions for displaying a graphical user interface that has a first area for displaying the chat transcript of the instant messaging session and that displays a topic list at an end of the chat transcript, a first sub-topic tab, and a second sub-topic tab; and

ninth program instructions for displaying, responsive to activation of a topic in the topic list, the topic with a first corresponding transcript segment in a second area of the graphical user interface, responsive to activation of the first sub-topic tab, displaying the first sub-topic with a second corresponding transcript segment in a third area of the graphical user interface, and responsive to activation of the second sub-topic tab, displaying the second sub-topic with a third corresponding transcript segment in a fourth area of the graphical user interface;

wherein the first through the ninth program instructions are stored in the non-transitory computer readable storage medium.

44. (Canceled)

45. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 43 further comprising:

tenth program instructions for saving a transcript of the instant messaging session to a repository;

eleventh program instructions for searching the repository for the topic tag; and

twelfth program instructions for exporting, responsive to determining that there is a match between the topic tag in the repository and an entry in an auto alert table, an associated transcript segment to an e-mail;

wherein the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth program instructions are stored in the non-transitory computer readable medium.